Written by Sunday, 30 December 2012 13:00 -



The <u>Suns</u> have lost some very close games over the week that easily could have resulted in wins instead of losses...but they didn't. As the saying goes, good teams find a way to win, bad teams find a way to lose. However, this team still doesn't feel as bad as their record currently appears. The players compete every night and give it their all...well, at least the majority of them do.

The Suns as a whole struggled on offense this week shooting only 43.7% overall. There are clearly some players doing more to help the team than others at this point, and we are beginning to see a trend in this respect. Here is a look at which players I believe helped the Suns the most over the past week.

1. Jared Dudley

Weekly Average: 21 points, 6.5 rebounds, and 3 assists in 38 minutes of play; -10

Dudley continues to be the Suns' best player. While that's definitely good for Dudley, it just goes to show how far the Suns have fallen. Still, Dudley is doing everything he can to help his team, as his stats clearly show. He also registered a career high 36 points this week in a loss against the Knicks .

2. Luis Scola

Weekly Average: 15.5 points, 5 rebounds, and 2 assist in 32 minutes of play;-9

Phoenix Suns Weekly Player Rankings: December 23 - December 29

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Scola had a very good week. He played solid overall and capped it off with a huge 33 point, 10 rebound performance against the <u>Timberwolves</u>. Luis makes up for his lack of athleticism with craftiness and veteran savvy, at least on the offensive side of the court.

3. Marcin Gortat

Weekly Average: 11 points, 8.5 rebounds, 2 assists, and 1 block in 30 minutes of play; -5

Gortat had a solid week overall, but really struggled against the massive Nickola Pekovic in Minnesota who held him to only 9 points and 3 rebounds, while managing 28 points and 11 rebounds mostly against Marcin. Gortat has to find a way to use his agility and skill against bigger, stronger centers like Pekovic...but Marcin is still a very good starting center overall who helps the Suns much more than he probably gets credit for.

4. Goran Dragic

Weekly Average: 9 points, 5 assists, 2 rebounds in 27 minutes of play; -4

Dragic had an up and down week, and his injury halfway through the Knicks game certainly didn't help. However, Dragic actually played his best game coming off of his injury against the T-Wolves, racking up 16 points and 12 assists while playing good defense against the opposing guards as well. This is the type of performance most Suns' fans expect to see from Dragic on a more consistent basis...He certainly has the ability.

5. Sebastian Telfair

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Weekly Average: 9.5 points, 3 assists, and 1 steal in 25 minutes of play; -4

Bassy played solid as a back-up this week and also when asked to lead the starting unit for a game and a half while Dragic was injured. Although his offensive production was terribly inefficient (14-45 for the week at .311...yuck!), he was able to run the offense fairly well on both units .

6. Shannon Brown

Weekly Average: 10 points, 4 rebounds, and 4 assists in 36 minutes of play; -6

Brown is another player who is trying to do all he can, but who's inefficiency is probably hurting the team. Brown shot 25-63 on the week (.396) overall and still has the tendency to take far too many bad shots, especially when taking the ball up court and shooting before his teammates are there to set up the offense or have a chance at rebounding the missed shot. Brown is certainly giving it his all though; he just needs to play within himself and it's up to Alvin Gentry to ensure he does.

7. Markieff Morris

Weekly Average: 5 points, 4 rebounds, and 2 steals in 15 minutes of play; -2

Markieff quietly had a pretty solid week overall. With the exception of his game against the Knicks in which he went 0-3 from the field and only played 7 minutes, he was efficient and effective on both ends of the floor and helped the second unit. I would still like to see more hard-nosed defense from Markieff and more explosiveness inside on offense, but he's playing solid right now, if nothing else.

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8. Jermaine O'Neal

Weekly Average: 4 points, 5 rebounds, and 1.5 assists in 16 minutes of play; -7

O'Neal is doing a great job on defense in his limited minutes even when he doesn't make much of an impact offensively. His best game came against the <u>Pacers</u> where he was giving <u>Roy</u> <u>Hibbert</u>

fits, only to be inexplicably pulled in the fourth quarter after helping to mount a great comeback to re-take the lead. O'Neal is another player struggling to find the basket though, shooting 5-14 for the week, mostly at the rim. He also missed the T-Wolves game because of back spasms..Let's hope he get's healthy soon.

9. P.J. Tucker

Weekly Average: 1 point, 2 rebounds in 15 minutes of play; -3

Tucker doesn't seem like he should be sitting near the bottom of the rankings, but here he is. The fact is, he has to find a way to make more of an impact with the minutes he is being given. Yes, his defense has been solid. But offensively, Tucker shot only 2-6 over these four games, and while he's not expected to be an offensive key, he missed some crucial shots in critical moments that the Suns really needed. But the real problem in my opinion is his rebounding. Tucker should be averaging more than 2 rebounds in 15 minutes of play...even Beasley is averaging more. This ranking isn't based on heart or effort, if it were Tucker would be near the top every week. Instead, it's based on overall impact, good or bad, and Tucker needs to find a way to make more of an impact than he is right now.

10. Michael Beasley

Weekly Average: 7 points, 3 rebounds, and 2 assists in 16 minutes of play; -1

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Beasley still isn't an efficient scorer and often hurts the team with his shots selection, but he has been trying to contribute in other ways, and has helped set up his teammates on occasion. He had two pretty decent games this week against the Knicks and the Pacers, before going 1-8 against the T-Wolves. And that's the problem with Beasley right now...you just can't count on him. If he happens to have a good game or two you just have to take it as an unexpected bonus.

So there you have it...Feel free to voice your opinion in the comments below!